

ECOSYSTEM STATUS INDICATORS

Marine Mammals

Contributed by NMFS National Marine Mammal Lab Staff, AFSC

Edited by E. Sinclair and J.W. Testa, NMFS, National Marine Mammal Lab

7600 Sand Point Way, N.E.

Seattle, WA 98115

Note: Research summaries and data, as well as slides and posters of recent research efforts into population trends among marine mammals are available electronically on: <http://nmml.afsc.noaa.gov> and http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot_res/PR2/Stock_Assessment_Program/sars.html

Descriptions of the range, habitat, diet, life history, population trends and monitoring techniques of marine mammals in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea were provided in previous Ecosystem Considerations Chapters (Livingston 2001, 2002, Boldt 2003). The text below summarizes an update of the status and trends for three pinniped species that are currently of particular concern and thought to have the most significant interactions with Alaskan groundfish fisheries, either because of direct takes or diet overlap. A general discussion of recent abundance surveys for large cetaceans is presented as well. A summary table of the best estimates regarding the status of all stocks of marine mammals in Alaskan waters through 2003 is provided.